

## United States Senate

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October 22, 2007

Howard Frumkin, MD, DrPH  
Director  
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
1600 Clifton Road, NE  
Mail Stop E28  
Atlanta, GA 30333

Calvin B. Johnson, MD, MPH  
Secretary of Health  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Pennsylvania Department of Health  
Health and Welfare Building  
7th & Forster Streets  
Harrisburg, PA 17120


Dear Drs. Frumkin and Johnson:

I appreciate the work that the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PA DOH) and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) have done to review the incidence of *polycythemia vera* (PV) in the Carbon, Luzerne and Schuylkill tri-county area. I am heartened by the study's findings that there are no environmental or occupational causes for the disease; however, the fact remains that there is a higher than usual number of cases for this community.

As such, I urge the PA DOH and ATSDR to continue to study and monitor the cases that are reported, as well as to keep the residents and the medical community apprised of all findings so as to improve diagnosis and treatment. Additionally, I understand that this PV incidence in the tri-county area presents an opportunity for additional academic study into the cause of the disease, which is currently unknown. I encourage your agencies to partner with able academic institutions as necessary and know that I am committed to working to find adequate resources for further study.

The health of my constituents is of utmost importance and I would greatly appreciate your continued attention to this matter. Thank you for your assistance thus far.

Sincerely,



Arlen Specter